

ERIE-NIAGARA REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

25 DELAWARE AVENUE, SEVENTH FLOOR

BUFFALO, NEW YORK 14202

PHONE: 716-858-8859 FAX: 716-858-8895

E-MAIL: kniazukt@erie.gov

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Memorandum

To: ENRP Co-Chairs Bradley Erck & Barry Weinstein, MD

From: Transportation Subcommittee Chair Hal Morse

Re: October & December 2002 meetings

Date: December 6, 2002

The Erie-Niagara Regional Partnership's Transportation Subcommittee met October 25 and December 3, 2002 at Christino's at the Amherst Marriott. Present for the October meeting were subcommittee members Morse, Burmaster, Ferraro, Meckler (proxy), and Wendel, as well as ENRP Co-Chair Weinstein, ENRP Member Titus, Clyde Johnston from the Niagara County Building Trades, and Seneca Nation of Indians representatives Jody Clark and Dennis Linn. Present for the December meeting were subcommittee members Morse (proxy), Burmaster, Ferraro, Lehman, and Wendel, as well as ENRP Co-Chair Weinstein.

Highway System Presentation

Subcommittee Member Peter Wendel continued his Highway System Presentation. Wendel reiterated the need for ENRP to look at the big picture and think more long term, especially on transportation issues. Rather than simply project out as to where we think we'll be in the future based on current data, we should be deciding where we want to be, and then work to get there.

Specifically, an examination of our North-South and East-West roads show a number of segments with little connection between them. The few that are connected such as Transit Road are becoming overdeveloped. There are two functions for a road, access to property along that road and to move traffic. Often, these two functions are not complementary.

Possible tie-ins to efforts such as the GBNRTC's Long Range Plan 2025 or the Framework for Regional Growth should be explored. GBNRTC will also reexamine Functional Classification of roads next year, helping to resolve the traffic vs access issue and relationship to State and local road responsibilities. Subcommittee Member Ferraro stressed that the Framework will have an infrastructure component, but both he and Subcommittee Member Lehman noted that in many ways the land use function will define the infrastructure needs. Lehman added that while in Niagara County the problem is primarily the lack of connection, in Erie County it is more the condition of the infrastructure. Wendel countered,

however, that connectivity disconnects are really a problem in both counties.

Members agreed that one focus of examining routes should be truck traffic. The GBNRTC's last truck route assessment was done in 1998, and it would be a valuable tool for the Framework if updated. Another issue for the Framework to address is the fact that often municipalities are adopting master plans before interfacing them with regional transportation plans. This leads to conflicting goals and priorities. Better communication must be established.

Seneca Nation Transportation Issues

Seneca Nation of Indians Transportation Manager Jody Clark and Transportation Project Manager Dennis Linn joined the Subcommittee at the October meeting. Obviously, the Niagara Falls casino will bring with it transportation issues. Increased traffic will be one factor, but making sure there is adequate public transportation to bring consumers and workers to and from the casino in the afternoon, evening, and night will also need to be addressed. Ms. Clark gave a brief history of the evolution of the Seneca Community Planning and Development Department, and stressed that with an increased presence in Western New York, there is a greater opportunity ahead of us for collaboration. The Senecas plan to promote our entire region as a tourist destination, and there will be an economic and tourist impact to the casino plans. As such, Ms. Clark and Mr. Linn have been added to the ENRP's e-mail list, and have been welcomed to observe our meetings.

Job Development & Transportation

Following receiving approval from the ENRP to pursue a job development and transportation project to use public transportation to link people to jobs, it was decided that this would be one of the Subcommittee's main projects for 2003. It was suggested that the two counties' Social Services Departments might be helpful on this topic.

Other Topics

Other topics discussed included an international fast ferry project, the Peace Bridge project, and cross border issues